



Air Force Memorial Dedication Remarks
Saturday, 14 October 2006
Rodney J. McKinley
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

Thank you, Mr. Schieffer

Mr. President, Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary Wynne

General Moseley, Mr. Perot – I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate in this historic event.

I am deeply honored to be in the company of so many great Airmen and great Americans.

We are proud to serve in your United States Air Force. Our allies emulate us. Our enemies fear us.

While advanced technology propels us, we are the most powerful air, space, and cyberspace force on the planet because outstanding men and women continue to volunteer to serve, and true patriots continue to support us. My sincerest thanks for your unwavering commitment to freedom.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, we dedicate this magnificent Memorial to every Airman..... from the pioneers of powered flight, all the way to today's globally engaged air, space, and cyberspace professionals.

People like:

- Lieutenant Walter Truemper and Staff Sergeant Archibald Mathies, who in February 1944 gave their lives while attempting to land the battle-damaged aircraft carrying their severely injured pilot.
- Chief Master Sergeant Richard Etchberger, who in 1968 gallantly secured the rescue of three Airmen from the over run radar site, before he was killed by enemy fire.
- Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Jacobson who died September 28, 2005, near Camp Bucca, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device hit her convoy.

There are thousands more examples throughout our history that bear witness to ordinary Americans transforming into courageous Airmen.

We see unmatched courage and commitment every day as our Airmen fight the Global War on Terror.

And we also continue to watch some of America's finest sons and daughters raise their right hand and swear to support and defend our Constitution.

At 10 o'clock this morning we welcomed 72 young Americans into our Air Force.

They will soon head to Basic Military Training at Lackland AFB, Texas, where yesterday, Bret Ward from Mobile, Alabama graduated with top honors among 729 Airmen completing basic training.

Tomorrow, and into the future, we'll continue to welcome talented, dedicated Americans into our ranks.

We'll never forget those who came before us. We'll continue to extend our deepest gratitude to those remarkable Airmen, who loyally and courageously served our Country.

It is the ongoing cycle for our Air Force "Family of Airmen."

This incredible Memorial... these spires... pay a long overdue tribute to the millions of officers, enlisted and civilians, who proudly boast the title of Airman!

Thank you for being here today and thank you for supporting America's Airmen.